

## **Country Report on Holocaust Education in Task Force Member Countries**

DENMARK

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### **Summary**

The Danish primary and lower secondary school (mandatory part of the Danish school system for children ages 7 to 15) are regulated by the Folkeskole Act of 2003. It establishes a common framework for all primary and lower secondary schools but at the same time leaves a wide scope for its implementation in the individual school. The same approach is taken at the upper secondary level (children ages 16 to 18).

Neither government ministries nor local authorities operate with an official directive specifically concerning the teaching of the Holocaust, but there is a widespread tradition among schools to focus on this subject matter and a wealth of material is available for teachers to choose from. It can therefore be concluded—even in the absence of statistical evidence—that the Holocaust is *de facto* an integral part of Danish education.

The Holocaust is taught by many teachers in connection with the subjects of History and Civics and, to a lesser extent, the subjects of German and Religious Education. Although the Holocaust is not defined in the education plans, it is generally regarded as the genocide committed against Jews during World War II. Danish textbooks devote considerable space to the events of October 1943, as well as to the history of Danish Jews and their integration. In addition to traditional textbook material, Holocaust education resources can be found at [www.holocaust-undervisning.dk](http://www.holocaust-undervisning.dk) and [www.folkedrab.dk](http://www.folkedrab.dk).

Since 2003, Denmark has observed Auschwitz Day on 27 January. The Danish government established this day following the international conference on the Holocaust held in Stockholm in 2000, where the participating countries committed themselves to the Declaration of the Stockholm International Forum on the Holocaust.

The objective of Auschwitz Day is to promote education about the Holocaust and other genocidal regimes among schools, youth education institutions, universities, and the general public.

We have not encountered any difficulties in establishing this day of national consciousness—on the contrary, from the outset there has been wide support among all governmental sectors and within

civil society to contribute to its success. The Danish Ministry of Education allocates two million DKK (approximately 360.000 USD) every year for Auschwitz Day.

No official studies have been carried out by the Ministry of Education from which we could assess what obstacles exist to teaching the Holocaust in Denmark. Nevertheless, it should be noted that until now we have been able to call upon witnesses to help provide education about the Holocaust; this is less and less the case as that generation diminishes. Therefore we anticipate that the need for accessible educational material on the Holocaust will increase.

**Full report following the question guideline:**

**1. What official directives from government ministries and/or local authorities regarding the teaching of the Holocaust exist in your country? Please attach these directives to your answer.**

Neither government ministries nor local authorities operates with an official directive specifically concerning the teaching of the Holocaust.

The Danish primary and lower secondary school (the mandatory part of the Danish school system for children ages 7 to 15) are regulated by Act no. 870 of 21 October 2003. (See Annex I for a description of its general objectives.) It establishes a common framework for all primary and lower secondary schools but at the same time leaves a wide scope for its implementation in the individual school.

The same approach is taken at the high school level.

The Holocaust is taught by many teachers in connection with the subjects of History and Civics and, to a lesser extent, the subjects of German and Religious Education. There is no specific curriculum. The Danish Minister of Education, Bertel Haarder, is planning a curriculum review for history in connection with the government platform for primary and lower secondary school; at the same time the number of history lessons is being increased.

With regard to the change in the history curriculum, Bertel Haarder has expressed a desire for a new ministerial order to establish a general rule that would stipulate part of the content. The general rule would cover 25 to 40 periods and events which all children would be required to study and would enable the ministry to ensure that the teaching complies with their standards. A committee of experts would be created to review the curriculum.

**2. If the Holocaust is not a mandatory subject, what percentage of schools chooses to teach about the Holocaust?**

The Holocaust is not mandatory, per se, in primary or lower secondary school or in upper secondary school. As outlined above, Denmark has chosen a framework approach.

No statistical evidence exists as to the exact percentage of schools that elect to teach the Holocaust.

However, it should be emphasized that there is a widespread tradition among schools to focus on this subject matter and a wealth of material is available for the teachers to choose from. It can therefore be concluded—even even in the absence of statistical evidence—that the Holocaust is *de facto* an integral part of Danish education.

### **3. How is the Holocaust defined?**

The Holocaust is not defined within the education plans but is generally referred to as the genocide committed against the Jews during World War II.

### **4. Is the Holocaust taught as a subject in its own right, or as part of a broader topic? Explain the reasoning behind this decision.**

At the primary and lower secondary levels, the Holocaust is sometimes taught in its own right and sometimes as a part of a broader topic—usually, but not exclusively, within the subjects of History from the sixth to ninth form levels (ages 12 to 15) and Civics from the eighth to ninth form levels (ages 14 to 15).

The same approach is used at the upper secondary level.

This approach follows from the Danish framework described above.

**5. At what age(s) do young people learn about the Holocaust in schools? Do students encounter the Holocaust in schools more than once? Please give details.**

As stated above, the Holocaust is usually, but not exclusively, taught for the first time in History from the sixth to ninth form levels (ages 12 to 15) and in Civics from the eighth to ninth form levels (14 to 15 years). For an overview of the distribution of hours in the Danish education system, please see Annex III.

In the absence of statistical data, it is impossible to determine whether students encounter the Holocaust in schools more than once.

**6. How many hours are allocated to teaching and learning about the Holocaust in schools?**

At the primary and lower secondary levels, the Holocaust is integrated into the subjects of History and Civics. As Annex III demonstrates, Danish students in the primary and lower secondary school receive a total of 300 hours of history and 120 hours of civics instruction.

At the upper secondary level, the Holocaust is integrated into the subjects of History and Civics as well. As of August 2005, students will receive a total of 190 hours of History and of Social Studies and Civics instruction during three form levels. The Holocaust is taught as a part of both subjects.

**7. In what areas of study (history, literature, sociology, theology) is the Holocaust taught? In each case, briefly outline the rationale for teaching the Holocaust in this particular subject area.**

At the primary and lower secondary levels, the Holocaust is integrated into History and Civics. Denmark believes that these are the most appropriate disciplines to address the Holocaust.

In upper secondary school, the Holocaust is mainly, though not exclusively, taught as a part of History, in which teachers normally cover German history from 1919 to 1945. All history teachers are required to produce a thorough report on the topics addressed and the texts used in their classes; past reports indicate the Holocaust has been covered extensively. The Holocaust is also taught in connection with other subjects: in German class, as it arises in fiction and non-fiction texts; in French, with regard to the fate of the French Jews; in theology, together with Judaism and antisemitism; and in psychology and philosophy, as part of discussions about guilt, responsibility, and “evil.” In the last year of secondary school, students are required to produce a thematic paper; the Holocaust is frequently chosen as a topic.

**8. a) What historical, pedagogical, and didactic training is provided to teachers of the Holocaust at either the university level or the professional development level in your country?**

Teacher training seminars are held in cooperation with the Department for Holocaust and Genocide Studies and the Regional Centers for Educational Services. The Danish History Teachers' Association arranges courses on different topics; German history and the Holocaust have been a

topic in some of these. Danish teachers also participate in teacher training courses at Yad Vashem, and a variety of supplementary education offers exist. The history teachers association at the upper secondary school level arranges one-day courses on German history that often include a component on the Holocaust. In June 2002, the association published a 100-page special edition of their journal devoted to the Holocaust and other genocides.

**b) How many teacher-training sessions are held each year, and how many teachers are involved?**

No information is presently available.

**c) What funding is available for training in the teaching of the Holocaust in your country?**

From 1996 to 2003, some 130 Danish teachers took part in intensive courses about the Holocaust at Yad Vashem in Jerusalem, an exchange that was initiated by Israel during a Danish ministerial visit. Otto Rühl, Denmark's former representative at the European Teachers' Conference on Holocaust Education in London in 1995, was asked to arrange it. Most of those attending the first courses were upper secondary school teachers, but gradually more primary and lower secondary school teachers wanted to participate. This was difficult financially, as upper secondary school teachers had their courses paid for by the Ministry of Education and their respective schools, whereas the primary and lower secondary school teachers had to partially pay for it themselves.



This unfortunate situation was remedied with the establishment of the Danish Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies in 2000, which provided support for primary and lower secondary school teachers to attend the courses from 2000 to 2003, the most recent year in which they offered.

An attempt is presently underway to establish a course for Scandinavian teachers under the auspices of Yad Vashem.

**9. Has your country instituted a national Holocaust Memorial Day? If so, in which ways is this day marked and commemorated? What difficulties have you encountered in establishing this day of remembrance in the national consciousness?**

Since 2003, Denmark has observed Auschwitz Day on 27 January. The Danish government established this day following the international conference on the Holocaust held in Stockholm in 2000, where participating countries committed themselves to the Declaration of the Stockholm International Forum on the Holocaust.

The objective of Auschwitz Day is to promote education about the Holocaust and other genocidal regimes among schools, youth education institutions, universities, and the general public.

Auschwitz Day was established to:

- Commemorate the victims
- Ensure that remembrance of the Holocaust and other genocidal regimes is continued with future generations

- Reflect over lessons learned from the Holocaust, with the goal of preventing future genocides
- Promote individual responsibility, democracy, human rights, and tolerance

We have not encountered any difficulty in establishing this day of national consciousness—on the contrary, from the outset there has been wide support among all governmental sectors and within civil society to contribute to its success. The Danish Ministry of Education allocates two million DKK (approximately 360.000 USD) every year for Auschwitz Day.

**10. Has your country established a national Holocaust memorial and/or museum? What numbers of students visit this memorial/museum each year?**

On the 8 June 2004, the Danish-Jewish Museum was inaugurated in the presence of her Majesty Queen Margrethe II. Designed by architect Daniel Libeskind, the museum has been a success, with 20,000 visitors having come through its doors since its opening—equalling the estimate for the entire year.

Moreover, several memorials have been erected in honor of the October 1943 rescue of Danish Jews—and all have been the initiative of private individuals or local authorities. Behind the Synagogue in Copenhagen, there is a Holocaust memorial, though it is not open to the public.

**11. Please estimate the percentage of students in your country who visit authentic sites, and list three primary sources of funding available in your country for visits to authentic sites.**

We do not possess the statistical data needed to give an estimation of the percentage of students who visit authentic sites.

The question of funding for such purposes is the exclusive responsibility of the 271 municipalities.

**12. What are the three major textbooks used in teaching the Holocaust in your country? How many pages do your school textbooks allocate to the Holocaust, and on which aspects do they focus?**

It is the responsibility of the individual teacher to choose textbooks approved by the local school board.

At the primary and lower secondary school levels, a wide variety of basic history books featuring chapters on the Holocaust, as well as more thematic books focusing on the Holocaust, are available.

At the upper secondary school level, there is one significant resource book about the Holocaust: K. C. Lammers's *Vejen til Auschwitz (The Way to Auschwitz)*. There is another resource book by M. Mogensen, O. Rühl, and P. Wiben titled *Aktionen Mod de Danske Jøder (The Action against the Danish Jews)*. Three other books are particularly relevant due to their comprehensive scope: Walter Hofer's *Nationalsocialismen* (1957), Held and Thomsen's *Nazismen* (1971), and Peter Frederiksen's *Det Tredje Rige (The Third Reich; 2001)*.

Furthermore, in January 2005 a Danish translation of S. Bruchfeld and P. Levine's *Tell ye your children* was published.

Other important sources can be found at [www.holocaust-undervisning.dk](http://www.holocaust-undervisning.dk) and [www.folkedrab.dk](http://www.folkedrab.dk).

**13. What strategies of differentiation are typically used to make the study of the Holocaust accessible to students of different ages and with different learning needs?**

There is no official strategy.

**14. How far and in what ways is your country's own national history integrated into the teaching of the Holocaust?**

As stated above, it is left to the teachers to select material for the teaching of History and Civics.

Danish textbooks dedicate considerable space to the events of October 1943, as well as to the history of Danish Jews and their integration.

**15. What are the three major obstacles to teaching and learning about the Holocaust in your country?**

No official studies have been carried out by the Ministry of Education from which we could assess what obstacles exist to teaching the Holocaust in Denmark. Nevertheless, it should be noted that until now we have been able to call upon witnesses to help provide education about the Holocaust;

this is less and less the case as that generation diminishes. Therefore we anticipate that the need for accessible educational material on the Holocaust will increase.

We have described the scope of Denmark's educational material about the Holocaust in our answer to Question 12. We plan to address future needs for Holocaust education through Web sites, publications, exhibitions, and courses.

**In response to the question raised by the EWG, subcommittee nr. 5, as a result of the review of the June 2005 country reports:**

The focus of Auschwitz Day on schools and education is an example of a concrete measure we have undertaken to raise awareness of the Holocaust. In the future, Auschwitz Day will provide teachers, pupils, and students with knowledge of the mechanisms needed to avoid new genocides. The Danish Institute for International Studies (DIIS) has set up two Web sites featuring extensive resource material and teaching suggestions.

An annual sum of two million DKK has been set aside for Auschwitz Day. A substantial part of this money goes to education, including to a number of teacher and student courses aimed at upper secondary school. At the same time, the Ministry of Education is providing professional assistance for both education and local commemorations.

A Web site has also been created in connection with the commemoration of the 60th anniversary of the liberation of Denmark. The site features eyewitness accounts, background articles, photographs, film clips, and references to other sources concerning the plight of Danish Jews during World War II.

In connection with the 60th anniversary of the liberation of Denmark, there has been a focus on the nation's refugee policy in the period leading up to and during the occupation. The results of this study will inform future educational materials.

The Ministry of Education has supported an international travelling exhibition on Anne Frank, which has been displayed in a number of Danish schools in recent years. Professor Uffe Østergård (DIIS) has opened the exhibition in each venue, with assistance provided by the local mayor, Holocaust witnesses, and other prominent people. A Danish government minister has also participated in the exhibition's opening on two occasions.

The Ministry of Education has supported the publication of Red Cross materials concerning international humanitarian law, including an adaptation of *Exploring Humanitarian Law* from the International Committee of the Red Cross and the Educational Development Center.

Please see also the response to Question 15.

## **Annex I**

**The "Folkeskole" is the Danish municipal primary and lower secondary school**

The Folkeskole was founded in 1814, and all children were given the right to seven years of education. The subjects taught then were religion, reading, writing, and arithmetic. Since then, only six major changes have been made to the Education Act, in 1903, 1937, 1958, 1975, 1993, and 2003. The most recent changes to the Education Act passed the parliament in April 2003 and will be introduced to municipalities and schools in the coming years. According to Danish tradition, a development program for schools supports the changes to the legislation.

Education is compulsory in Denmark from the age of 7 to 16. Whether education is received in the publicly provided municipal school, in a private school, or at home is a matter of personal choice as long as standards are met. It is education itself that is compulsory, not school.

### **The Aims of the "Folkeskole"**

- (1) The Folkeskole shall—in cooperation with the parents—further the pupil's acquisition of knowledge, skills, working methods, and ways of expressing him- or herself and thus contribute to the all-around personal development of the individual pupil.
- (2) The Folkeskole shall endeavour to create such opportunities for experience, industry, and absorption so that the pupil develops awareness, imagination, and a desire to learn, along with confidence in his or her own possibilities and a basis on which to form independent judgements and take personal action.
- (3) The Folkeskole shall familiarise the pupil with Danish culture and contribute to his or her understanding of other cultures and of the interaction between humans and nature. The school shall prepare the pupil for active participation, joint responsibility, rights, and duties in a society based on freedom and democracy. The school's instruction and daily life must therefore be built upon intellectual freedom, equality, and democracy.

## **The Folkeskole in Figures**

271 municipalities (02/03)

1666 municipal schools (01/02)

575.492 pupils (01/02)

28.642 classes (01/02)

19.4 pupils per class on average (01/02)

1:10.7 Teacher/pupil ratio (00/01)

98% of all children attend pre-school

48,284 teachers, of which 64% are women (00/01)

9,171 pupils receive extensive special educational assistance (00/01)

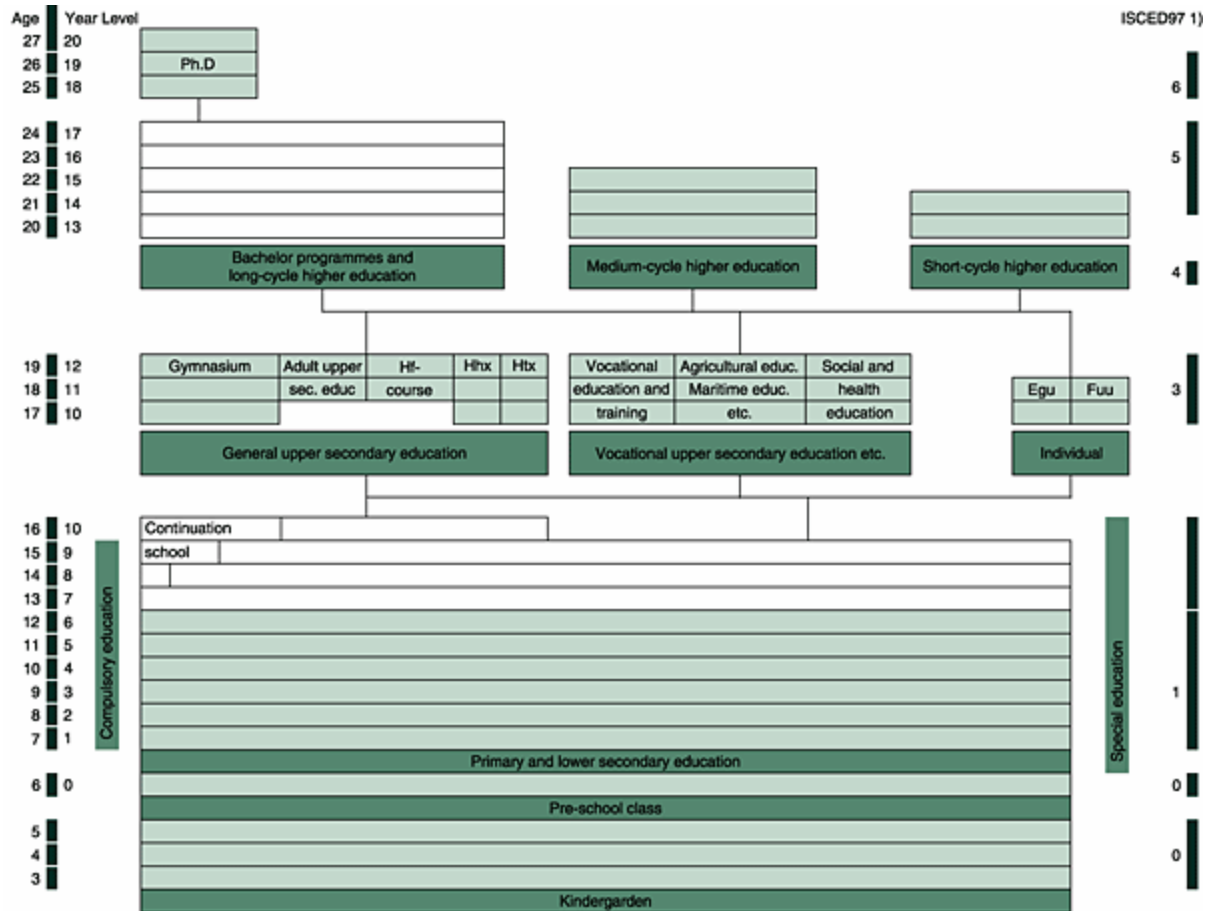
53.446 bilingual pupils, with 20% from a Turkish background (01/02)

47,851 DKK net operational expenditure per pupil (00/01)



## Annex II

### Diagram of the Danish Mainstream—Education System 2000



*Note:* The age is the theoretical minimum age for the formal courses of education, excluding adult education. After basic school, the pupils are often older due to sabbaticals, waiting time, change of study programme, etc. The arrows illustrate general connections between basic school, upper secondary, and higher education but not all actual transitions.